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ABSTRACT

This book challenges the modern certainty that education is a universal good and a human right and celebrates the well-being still enjoyed in the commons and cultures of people living at the grassroots. The first section describes how education is an instrument of acculturation. Within two generations of formal schooling, people are separated from their language and culture and are dependent upon Western culture's "rights" and the rewards of the market economy that can only be obtained through further education. In spite of the genuine concerns of multicultural educators and their efforts to preserve cultures, multicultural education is an oxymoron because a culture cannot be adequately represented, preserved, or transmitted by an institution designed to transmit another's culture. The second section describes grassroots postmodernism as an ethos of women and men who are liberating themselves from the oppression of modern society. Examples are given of instances in Mexico, Central America, and South America where indigenous peoples are regaining their cultural autonomy from the clutches of the market economy and its educational model that excludes all other cosmovisions. Section 3 maintains that our hope does not lie in reforming the educational system or dismantling it but with the Third World cultures that are still alive and flourishing in spite of the pressures, restrictions, and burdens imposed on them by the technological system. Aided by those among them who have become deprofessionalized incarnate intellectuals, Third World cultures are using their common sense to bypass the technological system and improve their own models and structures that do not dismember their communities or disconnect learning from doing. The epilogue recounts how the emerging grassroots coalitions that are formulating political controls to protect and strengthen their ventures demonstrate that global forces can only have concrete existence in their local incarnations. (Contains 151 references.) (TD)

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